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have been subjected to rather careful study by experts. The result is a statement regarding tones in Ebo. Some changes are made in his earlier views of the matter; there are more tones in these languages than he at first believed, but he is in doubt as to how many must be recognized. The volumes are published and distributed by the Government of Nigeria, which deserves credit for its encouragement of anthropological study.

FREDERICK STARR

Specimens of Languages from Southern Nigeria. NORTHCOTE W. THOMAS.
London: Harrison and Sons, 1914. 8°, pp. 143.

Also by Mr Thomas and distributed by the Government of Nigeria is this volume of specimens of languages. For the most part the matter is arranged in tables, 151 numbered words or phrases being given in fifty different languages or dialects. The matter is varied and of varying value; its arrangement is rather confused and disorderly. The material will however prove useful in fixing linguistic forms and in tracing relationships.

FREDERICK STARR

The Languages of West Africa. FREDERICK WILLIAM HUGH MIGEOD.
London: Kegan Paul, French, Trübner and Co., 1911, 1913. 2 vols.
8°, pp. VIII, 373; IX, 436. (Price 35 shillings.)

No more important book regarding African languages has appeared than Migeod's *Languages of West Africa*. As a transport officer, the author has spent years upon the west coast and has an actual practical knowledge of several of the more important languages within his district. He estimates the number of languages spoken within the area of his investigation at four hundred, and his book is devoted to a comparative study of some of these. The work represents an astonishing industry and an unusual independence in thought and method. The plain and simple statement of some of the difficulties he has met is not the least important part of the book. Few persons realize the fundamental difference in operation between the negro and European minds,—nay between the mental operations of African and African. This difference renders the gathering of vocabularies and specimens of languages a difficult and uncertain task. It is doubtful whether most of the vocabularies collected by travelers and questionnaire workers have any value. Among the difficulties in the study of African languages one of the most immediate lies in the phonology. Not only are there strange sounds in

these languages, the sounds are also extraordinarily vague and fluctuating; the possibilities of permutations for euphony or ease of pronunciation, or in response to grammatical necessities are inconceivable; tone, too, enters into the utterance of words and the variations in tone profoundly affect meaning. Whether these strange and variable sounds are to be laboriously represented by special type, introducing strange diacritical marks and tonic accents is a disputed question. We believe that Migeod is wise in refraining from so doing; he uses as simple an alphabet as possible,—surely a sensible procedure as his work involves the citation of scores of tongues and does not in the least aim to teach the practical use of any. Believing that grammatical structure is far more important in tracing history and relationship of languages than lexical similarities, he lays chief stress on it. He first presents a tabular statement of grammatical rules in thirty-three languages; here at a glance one becomes aware of differences of the most striking and fundamental sort and gains a hint of groupings and relationships. This most instructive table, full grasp of which will demand profound study, is followed by a study of numeral words. Migeod reduces vocabulary comparison to a minimum; instead of bringing together long lists of words of every kind, he confines himself absolutely to numerals and pronouns. These he considers among the oldest of words and least subject to change; he believes that so far as vocabularies are capable of supplying data for judgment, they are adequate. Within his geographical area number systems vary; there are quinary, decimal and vigesimal usages,—clearly based on finger-counting. The words for 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 18, 19, 20, 30, 51, 58, 59, 100 will supply all the information necessary. Tables are given of the numerals from many languages. A third tabulation consists of language specimens from fifty-four different languages; they are selected to illustrate the most important points in grammar and are simple in the extreme. In special chapters devoted to the plural, the verb, the article, gender, the adjective, the pronoun, the preposition, time, and language building, the author brings out clearly the most important characteristics of his West African languages. He also gives interesting and easy chapters on the Hausa Language—as an example of one speech—Literature, and Vai Writing and Literature. In two chapters of analysis, comparison, and elimination, he reaches a tentative, though no doubt in its main features a final, grouping and classification. On the whole he inclines to recognize six groups:—

- (1) Non-article Bantu type.
- (2) Article Bantu type languages: (a) prefix; (b) suffix.

- (3) Masculine and feminine gender languages.
- (4) Direct object preceding verb languages: (a) pure; (b) Bantuised.
- (5) Primeval languages.
- (6) Modern languages, a mixture of others and not classifiable.

This part of the book is full of passages deserving quotation, but we have said enough to show that Migeod's work is of high importance and that its anthropological and psychological value is equal to its linguistic significance.

FREDERICK STARR

The Mende Language. FREDERICK WILLIAM HUGH MIGEOD. London, 1908. 16°, pp. xvii, 18-271. (Price 7s 6d.)

A Grammar of the Hausa Language. FREDERICK WILLIAM HUGH MIGEOD. London. 1914. 16°, pp. xii, 229. (Price 7s 6d.)

Mende Natural History Vocabulary. FREDERICK WILLIAM HUGH MIGEOD. London. 1913. 16°, pp. viii, 9-64. (Price 4s. 6d.)

Three books by the same author and dealing with African languages have been published by the same house, Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner and Co. *The Mende Language* is a practical handbook. It consists of four parts,—useful phrases, grammar, vocabularies, stories. The method of giving the stories deserves imitation: they are told in brief sentences, each given a line, while the translation is printed in corresponding lines opposite. *The Grammar of the Hausa Language* is also a practical book, but intended for students who have already acquired some knowledge of the tongue. The grammar is fully given; the vocabulary is full and diversified; the common idiomatic expressions are carefully selected and arranged to illustrate the rules fully. *The Mende Natural History Vocabulary* shows that the Mende are fair observers of nature; animals and plants are fairly discriminated although some bases of grouping show a viewpoint quite unlike our own. The author gives in connection with the names many interesting notes upon native uses and notions regarding living things, both animals and plants.

FREDERICK STARR

Angass Manual, Grammar and Vocabulary. H. D. FOULKES. London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner and Co., 1915. 16°, pp. xviii, 313.

This book is not entirely a purely Angass manual; it is also, and largely, a discussion of Hausa analogies and problems. The Angass language is a monosyllabic language of extremely simple grammatical structure. Foulkes claims that its resemblances to Hausa are so many and striking